



Governor Terry E. Branstad  
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds  
San Wong, Director

## **Latino Affairs Commission – May 2013**

### **Support of Sensible Immigration Reform**

#### **A Call to Iowans and Iowa Elected Officials**

The Commission of Latino Affairs is a body of Governor appointed volunteers to serve Latinos and Iowans alike. One of our duties is to study the opportunities for and changing needs of the Latino population in Iowa. Immigration status is one of the barriers faced by a number of Latinos living in Iowa. The Commission of Latino Affairs believes and supports sensible and humane immigration reform and we are asking you to do the same.

Immigration is one of the most defining issues faced by our community. The Latino population in Iowa according to the Iowa Data Center 158,014 as of July 1 2011 and it is projected to be 430,344 by the year 2040.

In recent history Iowa has suffered from population decline which debilitates our workforce and as a consequence it debilitates our economy.

Governor Branstad and Lieutenant Governor Reynolds have four ambitious goals for their administration over the next few years: 200,000 new jobs for Iowans, a 15 percent reduction in the cost of government, a 25 percent increase in family incomes and to again have the nation's best schools.

To support immigration reform helps accomplish the success of Iowa and the goals of the administration.

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As it relates to our US Congressional Delegation and other influential policy leaders from Iowa:

Immigration policy and the lack of standard procedures are negatively impacting the Latino community in Iowa. The separation of families that may be in this country without documentation from their U. S. born children has caused much grief and despair too many Iowans during the recent years.

Commission of Latino Affairs

In crafting this essential legislation, we urge you to be mindful that as a nation of immigrants, how we treat new immigrants reflects our commitment to the values that define us. Specifically, we urge Congress to:

- Create a realistic path to citizenship for the 11 million aspiring citizens who call America home. Small details could have major consequences for millions of these aspiring citizens. We need to ensure a fair process when drafting legislation that takes into consideration who these new Americans are, and what they contribute to our country.
- Preserve the unity of families, traditional and nontraditional. Family unity plays a critical role in student success. Yet growing numbers of public school students live in fear that our nation's immigration policies will break up their families, forcing them to choose between their country and their loved ones — mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers. Family-based immigration is essential to keeping America strong.
- Incorporate and expand the DREAM Act and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Many of the more than 50,000 undocumented students who graduate from U.S. high schools are unable to pursue higher education simply because they are unable to afford it. Under current law, undocumented students can be denied access to in-state tuition, federal loans, and health benefits. Addressing these issues is a top priority for America's educators.

We look forward to working with you to make comprehensive immigration reform a reality at last. In addition we look forward to your vocal support for this overdue change in US policy.

If you would like to visit with our commission we would be more than happy to oblige. Please find our contact information attached.

Sincerely on Behalf of the Latino Affairs Commission

Commission of Latino Affairs